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RUEHZN/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE
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RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 3533
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RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 1758
RUEHGZ/AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU 0041
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 0388
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 1653
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
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RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//USDP/ISA/AP//
RHMFISS/CJCS WASHINGTON DC//J2/J3/J5//
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC//DHO-3//
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 HANOI 000398

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MLS, EAP/EP, INR, OES/STC, OES/IHA, MED, OGAC
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR ASIA (MELLIS, DSHARMA, CJENNINGS) AND
GH (GSTEELE, DCARROLL)
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOR OSD/ISA/AP (STERN)
HHS/OSSI/DSI PASS TO FIC/NIH (RGLASS) AND OGHA (JKULIKOWSKI/
/MABDOO/SCUMMINGS/DMILLER)
CDC FOR COGH (SBLOUNT), CCID (SREDD) AND DIV-FLU(NCOX/AMOEN)
USDA PASS TO APHIS, FAS (OSTA AND OCRA), FSIS
BANGKOK FOR RMO, CDC (MMALISON), USAID (MACARTHUR/MBRADY/CBOWES),
APHIS, REO (HHOWARD)
BEIJING FOR HHS HEALTH ATTACHE (EYUAN) AND CDC (JMC FARLAND)
PHNOM PENH FOR CDC INFLUENZA COORDINATOR(BBRADY)
ROME FOR FAO
VIENTIANE FOR CDC INFLUENZA COORDINATOR (ACORWIN)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [AMED](#) [EAGR](#) [PINR](#) [KFLU](#) [VM](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR LOFTIS REVIEWS VIETNAMESE RESPONSE TO AVIAN
INFLUENZA AND PLANS TO HOST 2010 MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

Ref: 08 Hanoi 599 (human vaccinations)

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¶1. (U) Summary: In meetings with the Embassy avian influenza team, other donors, USAID implementing partners, and the Government of Vietnam (GVN), Ambassador Loftis discussed the GVN response to avian influenza, its successes, and how the response might be improved. Ambassador Loftis informed the GVN and international donors that the United States would provide financial and technical support for the 2010 International Ministerial Conference on Avian and Pandemic Influenza (IMCAPI), which will likely be hosted by Vietnam. The GVN welcomed U.S. support and soon expects to have final approval from the Prime Minister to host the event, which likely will occur in March or April 2010. In every meeting, participants highlighted Vietnam's many successes, but noted the need to improve cooperation between human and animal health experts and the constant need to combat complacency among producers and consumers of poultry products. During a visit to a view a new biosecurity model village in Hung Yen province, Ambassador Loftis witnessed successful USAID-supported programs to buttress efforts to improve hygiene and limit the spread of avian influenza. End Summary.

Donor Support for 2010

12. (SBU) In his meeting United Nations Resident Representative John Hendra, European Community Ambassador Sean Doyle, and representatives of the United Nations System Influenza Coordination office (UNSIC), Ambassador Loftis reached consensus with his counterparts to support the 2010 International Ministerial Conference on Avian and Pandemic Influenza (IMCAPI) to be hosted by the Government of Vietnam (GVN). Loftis confirmed that USAID would provide technical and financial support for the conference, which he suggested should focus on lessons from avian influenza response for pandemic planning, review of other human diseases of animal origin, and the opportunity for Vietnam and others to review their responses (vaccinations, culling or poultry market modifications) with other countries facing avian influenza outbreaks. The UN and the EC reaffirmed their support for the Ministerial, which they hoped would take place in April 2010, after the peak avian influenza season and prior to the May 2010 World Health Assembly. Ambassador Doyle noted his particular pleasure with Ambassador Loftis' desire for the Ministerial to look at the broader health dimensions of avian influenza.

Donor Views of GVN Response

13. (SBU) The UN's Hendra noted that Vietnam had quickly mobilized in the face of early outbreaks in 2003 and 2004, but now needed to adopt a more sustainable, long-term plan. EU Ambassador Doyle, stated that while he admired the response by animal and human health experts, the two relevant ministries, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and the Ministry of Health (MOH), needed to better integrate their efforts. Success in fighting avian influenza could boost the reputation of MOH, not currently seen as a

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strong ministry, and assist overall public health reform. Technical experts at the World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) stressed solid cooperation with their GVN counterparts, but highlighted the need to change the behavior of those involved in the poultry sector, many of whom seem increasingly complacent due to the lack of large-scale outbreaks. While the GVN remains committed to its animal vaccination program, FAO and WHO want to work with the GVN to better identify the mechanisms through which the virus was spread through poultry and to develop poultry sector practices to limit that spread and limit exposure to humans.

Ministry of Health

14. (SBU) Dr. Nguyen Tran Hien, the Director General of the National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology (NIHE) within MOH, mirrored some of the comments from prominent donors and noted that Vietnam needed to improve collaboration between the animal and human health sectors. At the same time, Vietnam had much to be proud of, including ongoing NIHE efforts to develop a human vaccine for H5N1 avian influenza. Using monkey kidney cells, Hien reported successful laboratory testing and promising results in the first phase of human trials (reftel). (Note: This effort, done in collaboration with VabioTech, a private spin-off of NIHE, is one of three in Vietnam working to develop a human vaccine against H5N1 avian influenza. The USG has invested in this effort and one other at the Institute of Vaccines and Medical Biological Substances in Nha Trang. End Note) Dr. Nguyen Huy Nga, Director of the General Department of Preventive Medicine and Environmental Health, reviewed the GVN's extensive (and expensive) response to avian influenza and stressed Vietnam's commitment to sample sharing. Looking forward, GVN pandemic preparedness would focus on strengthening national surveillance and reporting, improving diagnostics and treatment, upgrading behavior change communications, and supporting health systems at district levels.

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

15. (SBU) Vice Minister Vu Van Tam noted that the initial avian influenza outbreaks in 2003-04 cost Vietnam 0.5 percent of its GDP at that time. Since that time, the central government has spent over USD 130 million (not including local government resources) to respond to the virus, but still faced many challenges, notably the difficulty in increasing the awareness of and changing behaviors in small-scale poultry farmers. Though Tam stressed that animal vaccinations remained the GVN's most effective response, the GVN strategy called for reorganization of poultry farming and the poultry supply chain to improve veterinary hygiene and food safety from farm to fork. The Vice Minister welcomed Ambassador Loftis' pledge of support for the 2010 IMCAPI and requested technical/logistical support, along with financial backing, for an event in March or April 2010. MARD is preparing a request to host the Ministerial for submission to the Prime Minister. Upon receiving approval (most likely in late May or early June), MARD

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would work with the USG and other donors to draft the agenda. Tam agreed that Vietnam should share its experiences with other donors and seemed receptive to Ambassador Loftis' requests that the Ministerial review broader pandemic preparedness and other human diseases of animal origin.

Model Biosecurity Poultry Village

16. (U) At Khoa Nhu village in nearby Hung Yen province, Ambassador Loftis joined the monthly village meeting to discuss common challenges to raising healthy poultry and prevent the spread of avian influenza. With the assistance from USAID, and working collectively, the community has improved village hygiene, farmers' individual practices, and community-wide perceptions about the risks and prevention of avian influenza. For instance, the community has worked together to clean up canals around the village and ensure that poultry waste is no longer dumped into this water source. All households now bag poultry waste for weekly collection. USAID is studying how to implement this successful model at poultry-raising villages around the country.

17. (U) Ambassador Loftis did not have the opportunity to clear this cable prior to departing Vietnam.

MICHALAK